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Impressions

Some Impressions of the

Ambleside Method

analog by Hen. Col.

Marx as Chapter IV Book

IV is An <sup>Essay</sup> Essay toward a

Philosophy of Education

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P. M. U. Vic. 26 Victoria St. S.W.,  
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# BOOK III

1919

No 4

## Some Criticisms of the Method

~~A LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR ALL~~

LORD BRYCE said recently that 'One of the principal objects of education, and one of the principal tests of whether the schools had succeeded in their work was the interest taken in reading.' If this test were applied to the millions of men and women who have taken up work in connexion with the War during the last four years, the results would not be flattering to our past educational methods. The reading habit is not a general characteristic of the British nation. Compulsory education has been in operation since 1870, yet few people could be found who would assert that our methods have produced citizens capable of enjoying a play of Shakespeare or a work by Scott or Dickens, or of discussing intelligently a topic of general interest. At the present time it is rare to see books of any kind in the homes of a large majority of so-called workers except Sunday School prizes. These are carefully wrapped up in paper and stored away. It has long been felt that something is wrong with our educational system or want of system. Children have left school without any love for learning or any desire to read. The boy who wrote 'I am fourteen to-day and will never open another book' reflects the general opinion of a majority of those who have passed through our schools.

The parents of the present generation are the products of past education and the general apathy to learning condemns our past methods. Their acquaintance with books began and ended with the dull Reader of thirty or forty years ago. They had heard such a term as 'British Empire,' but what it meant, or what were its potential powers, very few had any definite ideas. A General Election reminded people that there was a hazy something called the British Nation, but beyond the fact that there were Liberal, Conservative and Labour Parties few cared to investigate further. The idea of belonging to a nation or having any share or responsibility in its welfare scarcely ever occupied a moment's thought. When this deplorable ignorance is contrasted with the knowledge of the State possessed even by the children of some Continental nations, the difference is most marked. There might be social rumblings of discontent, the

Implements of Learning & Apple  
(Permission to reprint has been obtained)  
with a few alterations to the text



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by the Headmaster  
of the Council School  
March

and insight as *The Old Curiosity Shop* in Form II. In this form the advance in grasping motives and realising humour was very marked. The boys took the same interest as the lower boys in buying books for their own use. Shakespeare makes a great appeal to boys. One term one hundred copies of *As You Like It* were bought by the boys and girls, and another term a like number of *King Lear* were sold. Orlando is as great a hero in a way as their fathers and brothers in France. Touchstone makes a strong appeal and Rosalind wins the hearts of the pupils from the beginning. So keen is the discrimination of motive that a boy in Form III. asked 'Do you think, sir, that Edmund [in *King Lear*] was a German?' ~~He is in the school~~ *(in the school)*

The scheme has been in operation for over two years, and the change in interest is most marked. From Form I. onwards pupils feel that the school is a joy and a delight. There is a surprising keenness in the work, and the boys have become very alert. The characters in the books are clothed with such a reality as to make them a part of the life of the children. The battle between the Greeks and Trojans has been fought over again with sticks made from orange boxes, the boys agreeing among themselves who should be Hector, Agamemnon and Ulysses. The home-life has become awakened by new and strange names. At first parents thought that someone at school was qualifying for a place in an asylum. Now they are interested in the narrations of their children and find somewhere among the disused things of the home that there are copies of Scott or Dickens which belonged to their great-grandfathers. These now occupy an honourable place and are daily read.

This new interest is revealed in the quality, quantity and sentence-construction of written composition. While there still remains the spelling difficulty, children now see the need for words and their correct spelling. During the last two years spelling has much improved, and the vocabulary of the average child has greatly increased. The quality of the composition has become vastly higher. In fact when comparisons are made with work of children of the same age two years ago, the change is hardly credible. The following written exercises show what has been done after a year's work with the methods. They are given as written. A boy, age 7.

*Brill*  
*Keen*  
*Reader*

*St. Alban.*—One day a man fled to Alban's house and he asked Alban to hide him as quickly as he could. 'What evil have you done?' said Alban. 'No evil,' said he, 'but I am a Christian.' The next day Alban was talking to Amphibalus when a servant came and said the soldiers were at the gate. Then Amphibalus said 'Amen.' 'Do not be afraid,' said Alban, 'my servants will take you through a secret passage. Take off your cape.' Amphibalus did as he was told. Then Alban put on the cape and waited for the Romans. When the Romans saw who he was they took him to the Governor.

*Nineteenth Century*

(with acknowledgements to the Editor)

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A boy, age 8.

*Boadicea.*—Once there was a woman called Boadicea, she was a queen. She had a husband who was ill. Boadicea had two daughters. One day her husband died. But before he died he said to his wife 'I will give the Romans half of my land.' The Romans were greedy people and took the other half. They beat Boadicea with iron rods, and Boadicea shouted 'Give me my land back.' But they would not. The Britons all stopped at the bottom of a hill and Boadicea stood on the top. She talked to the Britons. 'Fight like your forefathers did.' Then they all followed Boadicea. At first the Britons were winning. Then the Romans. The Romans made the Britons run. When Boadicea came home she said to her daughters 'Drink of this.' The two girls were afraid. The mother said 'I will drink too.' A time after the Romans came into the house. They found Boadicea lying dead with her two daughters in her arms.

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ep A boy, age 8.

*Coronation of Arthur.*—Then with her two sons came Bellicent and King Leodogran asked if she knew about Arthur. She said 'O king, I will tell thee,' and she began her story of the coronation. As Arthur sat on the throne and the knights knelt to be knighted, he gave them such strict laws that some had pale faces, others had flushed faces. The sword was put down in front of him. He looked at it and on one side it said 'Take me,' on the other it said 'Cast me away,' and Arthur's face was sad; but Merlin said 'Take it, the time to cast it away is long.' So Arthur took it. Beside the throne was Merlin, and near him was the Lady of the Lake, who was clothed in white samite, while incense curled about her. She lived down in the deep, and whatever storms were upon the water she was calm, and she could walk on the water like our Lord. They heard the sound of holy hymns from out of the deep. Coming from a window behind the throne, which had on it the Crucifixion, were three coloured rays, flame, vert, and azure, which showed three queens. They were tall and stood in silence ready to help him at his need.

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A boy, age 9.

*Scrooge.*—While Scrooge was sitting in front of the fire taking his gruel he glanced at the tiles on which were pictures of the scriptures. But instead of seeing the real pictures he saw Marley's face. He got up and after walking up and down the room several times said 'Humbug.' He looked at a big bell which began to ring, and so did every bell in the house. They all stopped at once. Then he heard a clanking noise in the wine merchant's cellar as if some one were pulling a heavy chain over the wine casks. He then remembered that ghosts pulled chains and began to feel rather frightened. All at once the cellar door flew open with a booming sound. Then it came into Scrooge's room and stood in front of him. Scrooge said 'What do you want with me?' 'Much,' said the ghost. The ghost was transparent, so that Scrooge could see the two buttons on the back of his coat. He wore the same tights, the same waistcoat, and the same everything. Scrooge said 'Can you sit down?' The ghost said 'I can,' and did so.

Boy, age 12.

*Excalibur.*—'Excalibur' was the name of King Arthur's sword. He found it one fine summer's day when walking by a lake. An arm rose up

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from out the bosom of the lake clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful. He rowed across and took it and wore it like a king.

The hilt was set in with diamonds of extraordinary value, costly pearls, and myriads of topaz-lights and jacinth work of the subtlest jewellery. Arthur gazed so long that both his eyes were dazzled with the bright lights. On one side were the words 'Take me,' and on the other 'Cast me away.' He did not know what to do, but Merlin, the old magician, said 'The time to cast away is far from now,' so Arthur kept it and used it well.

The scene next comes to where the king is lying smitten thro' the helm in a ruined chapel, a broken chancel with a broken cross. The king is very sick, and thinks his wound has taken cold and that he will die before help comes.

The time had come to throw the sword away.

King Arthur said to Sir Bedivere 'Take my brand Excalibur, which was my pride, and throw it into the middle mere, watch what thou see'st and lightly bring me word.'

Sir Bedivere went. He paused and looked at the sword and thought it would be better to leave 'Excalibur' concealed there among the many knotted water-flags that grew beside the mere. So lightly went Sir Bedivere to the king.

The king drawing thicker breath said 'What hast thou seen, or what hast heard?' And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere, 'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, and the wild water lapping on the crag.' 'Ah unknighly traitor-hearted, Authority forgets a dying king, go again! I bid thee.' Sir Bedivere went a second time counting the dewy pebbles as he went. Again as he took the sword its richness overpowered him, and he hid it a second time. Would it not be better to keep the sword that it might be put in some great monarch's treasure-house and be shown at a joust of arms by some old man saying 'This is King Arthur's sword Excalibur wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake, nine years she wrought it sitting in the deeps upon the hidden bases of the hills.' So back he went to the king. 'Hast thou performed my command? what hast thou seen, or what hast heard?' To this the traitor-hearted Bedivere replied 'I heard the long ripple washing on the crag, and the wild water lapping in the reeds.' King Arthur mad with rage said 'Go again, and if thou spare to fling Excalibur a third time, I will arise and slay thee with mine own hand, for a man may fail in duty twice and yet the third time may prosper, Get thee hence.'

Down the rocks and ridges leapt Sir Bedivere, leaping among the bulrush beds, he clutched the sword, and strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand made lightnings in the splendour of the moon, and ere it dipped the surface an arm rose up clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, and brandished it three times and drew it under. And lightly went Sir Bedivere to the king. 'Ah,' said the king, 'I see by thine eyes what thou hast done, tell me what thou hast seen, or what hast heard.' Sir Bedivere told his story, and at the king's request carried him to the edge of the mere.

There is the greatest hope of the changes which will follow from these methods. The self-activity of the child finds an outlet in 'doing things' for himself; the learning by the scholars and not the teaching by the teachers gives confidence and self-reliance; the interest in the doings of men and women will act as a sure antidote against boredom and listlessness; the training to see a motive in action will lead to the weighing of newspaper

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talk and the deeds of men. A child leaving school with such a mass of experience will be loath to take his opinions from second-hand sources. The cultivation of an appreciation for pictures, music and poetry will give a distinct tone to the after-life. The proper use of books and the reading habit will fit a child, either to continue a higher education or to become an intelligent and skilful craftsman. This liberal education has its foundation in the religious, moral and spiritual ideas of the great minds of the past and present. The child is an individual waiting for the real experiences of life; the State is an aggregation of individuals each of whom gives something to the qualities of that State, and every British-born child comes into the world with potentialities which should make for the welfare of the British Empire. To transform these possibilities into real qualities is the first and last duty of all who have the care of the future citizens of our glorious Empire. As the individual helps to give character to the State, so education prepares the individual to fulfil the obligations of service, humanity and religion.

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WALTER SMITH.

Head Master of ~~St. John's~~ a  
Council School, ~~St. John's~~



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APPENDIX  
IMPRESSIONS OF SOME TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL  
AUTHORITIES CONCERNING THIS METHOD.

The Headmaster of a Council School says,

Yes. Our children have had oral lessons and voyages imaginary, and contour lessons, and worse still commercial geography, and date books, and pleasant extracts in reading books that you could read in three months, and whose thoroughfares you traversed backwards or forwards for the remaining nine months till you were bored stiff.

But you say, What is this extra reading that Miss Mason gives? Let me give you a list of what my kiddies in smoke-grimed Leeds have read in the Autumn term.

We read a section of Arnold Forster's English History, the contemporary section of French History, roughly speaking, from the Napoleonic Wars to beginning of the Crimean Wars. We read some of *The Antiquary* of Scott, the 2nd Canto of Byron's *Childe Harold*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, selections from Burns, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Cowper and Shelley. We learned something of the Painters: Turner, Gainsborough, Romney and others, and contemplated copies of their works. We looked upon the history of our country, not only on the political and social side, but also saw it as it was reflected in the painters and writers of the time. We watched the unfolding flower and growing seed in the Nature Book of Stopes and saw it actually in the growing plant. We read the delightful nature stories of Bees, etc., in the *Fairyland of Science*.

We turned to the unchanging East and saw, as through a glass darkly, the land of the Pharaohs, portrayed in the Book of the British Museum, marched and fought again with Alexander in the pages of Plutarch, learned to know the meaning and purpose of our own lives in Miss Mason's book, *Ourselves*, began to grasp the faith and trust that underlies all true citizenship in Forster's "*Laws of Every Day Life*," and last, but not least, wandered in the Forest of Arden in the company of Rosalind, Orlando, Touchstone, the melancholy Jacques, under the guidance of one William Shakespeare.

But there are certain things we did find out. First, as I have already hinted, a limiting of our view as to value of the oral lesson, an enhancing as to the value of letting the child come face to face with the best writers on a subject. Second, the discovery that the pupil had greater powers of mind than we (optimists always) had given him credit for, that the child thought not specially in single words, but more frequently in whole blocks, that the quicker children had almost uncanny powers of "sensing" a passage, that they took a whole picture in a sort of stride and passed on.

We found that ideas were being garnered and vocabularies were enlarging. We found that pupils were discovering harmonies between ideas really similar, belonging to different circumstances, and better still, collision between one kind of experience and another—that hard but most certain way of knowledge—that mental upset between different analyses, to be harmonised by some truth deeper still, that was waiting for the seeker before peace could again reign.

Then comes the question: Did the children attend? Now, there is the secret of the method. All the lessons call for what Professor James calls exteriorization. The Professor says somewhere: "If a man have knowledge and cannot exteriorize it, then he really hasn't got it." A somewhat Hiber-

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nian remark, but true. Therefore each lesson calls for exteriorization and this helps towards concentration in the hearer. Three ways of exteriorization come to mind :—

1. The written. Twenty minutes reading and ten composition (and you get more in that ten than you used to get in thirty in the old composition lesson)
2. Oral. Narration of the meaning of the part read, and here you get a rapid improvement in the pupil's power of expressing himself as well as in verbal memory. One boy (gifted with verbal memory), after hearing the soliloquy, The Seven Ages of Man, read once, stood out and gave it very nearly verbatim. It was very remarkable.

It is something if by this scheme one has been enabled to let in the light and air of a gentler and cleaner life and open pathways of joy along roads otherwise choked or barred by ignorance or upbringing, or worse.

" Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But chiefly reverence in us dwell."

### by A Director of Education

Miss Mason's aim is to educate a child to fulfil all the duties of a citizen, to comprehend and appreciate what is great and good, and to form character in conformity with the principles of religion and morality. The child is looked upon as a living, active, enquiring being, rather than a blank sheet of paper. All the potentialities of greatness are present, and the object of education is to transform these into realities.

Nature Study occupies an important place in the methods, and offers unlimited material for observation, comparison and contrast. Men, books and things are the educational media. I need not elaborate this. The methods are fully dealt with in the P.N.E.U. pamphlets, and in Home Education and School Education by Miss Mason.

The more practical aims seem to us to be :—

1. To help the child to carry forward youthful ardour and a desire for knowledge.
2. To maintain a keen interest all through school life, as a preparation for larger and wider interests.
3. To foster habits of concentration, continuous effort and self-reliance.
4. To enable the child to talk and write naturally and easily on what has been read or observed.
5. To cultivate a love for and sympathy with what is finest both in nature and the arts.

In order to touch the child at many points, a wide curriculum is provided. From the beginning good literature is read to the children, and narration by the scholars follows each reading. Food for thought is thus given and a vocabulary supplied for the expression of ideas. When narration becomes easy and free, the child is ready for written composition. An excellent preparation is thus given for individual study in higher forms. When individual study begins, the reproduction is mostly written. Here there is no suggestive questioning by the teacher nor can there be any shirking by the pupils. Each member of a class must reveal himself. At first the reproduction closely follows the book, which is natural; later the work becomes more original and individual. The study of an Author provides ample materials for exercises in composition. Nature study is first taken from real things. The child sees and handles while the teacher guides and suggests. The teacher next reads a description from a standard work, and in most cases this is amplified by the pupils reading from a well written



primer or text book. Thus the child seems to be able at a much earlier stage than usual to fit together his own philosophy of nature and life. History and Geography are approached through well written books read to the children in sections, and reproduced by them orally. Citizenship is based on Plutarch's Lives, an admirable preparation for the study of "The Life and Duties of a Citizen" and the "Laws of Every-day Life," by Arnold Forster. To develop some appreciation of Art, six pictures are studied each term, and in the higher forms this is linked with the drawing lessons. A well-known artist friend of mine is of opinion that all this is wrong, but his story is too long to tell you here. Music has a place in the curriculum, and with older pupils some attempts are made to cultivate musical appreciation by playing selections from some great master after a simple talk on the life and aspirations of the composer. On the principles of my artist friend this also should be all wrong. Handwork takes an important place. The scenes depicted in various books are used for original expression work in drawing. In the higher forms, Elementary Science affords many opportunities for the making of simple apparatus, and the school garden forms an important adjunct to the work of each programme. Both boys and girls take some Hygiene and Physiology in Form IV. . . .

When these difficulties had been understood and grappled with, both teachers and scholars took on a new alertness. . . .

We find that the careful selection of books in each subject makes the work more definite. The subject matter is ready to hand and the function of the teacher is to read it to the pupils in a natural, sympathetic and realistic way. The teacher becomes a medium conveying the thoughts expressed in the printed page. There is no explanation before reading; children are given an opportunity to interpret ideas for themselves. When uncommon words occur, they are written on the Black-board before the reading begins. If any point has not been understood then explanations are given. We find marked improvements in all the phases of school life. The power of attention is much stronger. Children discuss with each other persons, scenes and incidents read to them, a practice which overflows into the homes. The older members of a family tell the younger ones about their new knowledge. Powers of general observation have improved. Conversational readiness becomes a characteristic. A quarter of a century of these methods with all the children of England and the strong silent Englishman should be a rare bird! Written exercises show a marked advance on previous work. . . .

We have noted that children obviously make far greater efforts than before. Learning seems to have become easy, although the pace is decidedly quicker. Greater demands are made upon the resources and watchfulness of the teacher. . . .

The books chosen for general reading are thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed. Children enter into the spirit of the books and display a real insight into motives; humour is enjoyed; pathos brings tears and treachery, indignation and disgust. So great is the interest in these books that children frequently purchase books for their own use. Copies have been purchased, varying in number from fifty to one hundred in a school, of David Copperfield, Old Curiosity Shop, Christmas Carol, King Lear, Twelfth Night, Coriolanus, As You Like It, Tennyson's Poems, Pilgrim's Progress. So begin private libraries!

Another Schoolmaster adds—

When we were teaching classes in the mass we had little opportunity, but now with our classes working privately in small sections, we can help a

backward reader, discuss the portion of a book which any child is studying, and in many ways exert our influence on those children who require it. I place this advantage as one of the great ones of P.N.E.U. methods—personal contact with the individual.

I should like now to say a few words concerning the advantages which have accrued from eighteen months' usage of P.N.E.U. methods. Many, I won't say all, for that would be an ideal almost too much to expect, but many children have cultivated a taste for good literature and surely, if a child has learnt to appreciate the value of good books, the teaching has not been in vain. I have known children choose copies of some of the books as presents from parents, etc. I have known them borrow the books from school to make up lost ground. I have observed the interest shown in the P.U.S. lessons, and these are signs of what I have just stated. The children have secured greater freedom of expression. Compositions are less hackneyed and the quality has improved in such a manner as to be almost incredible without actually seeing the books. Term examinations prove that the knowledge gained is not here to-day and gone to-morrow. The field of information is very comprehensive as a perusal of the study books will show.

### A Secretary of Education,—

At long last the truth is emerging that there is no such hereditary inferiority of intellect, that the baby born in the cottage has all the intellectual possibilities of the baby born in a prosperous and lettered home. Whether they shall be realised depends upon the after environment. It is here that inequality comes in. In the one case development proceeds apace, helped at every turn and never hindered: in the other it is checked, arrested, hindered at every turn and never helped. . . .

"Oh, but," someone may say, "the child does not come to school to be amused and read novels." Certainly he does not, but how happy if in the course of educating him you can amuse, and still happier if you teach him to amuse himself. For, after all, that is going to be one of the chief fruits of his education, if it is successful. He does not learn Arithmetic merely that he may be a huckster, or Reading that he may be able to puzzle out the latest notice of the Food Controller in this grocer's shop. We want to open to him the greatest of all wholesome pleasures, and put at his command the wealth of wit and wisdom and beauty heaped high in an immortal literature. Then he may be a happy man and a good citizen, which no amount of oral reading out of text books will ever make him.

Either we miss our mark in the Elementary School or our aim is wrong. Miss Mason thinks that, gravely underestimating the child's capacity, we set our aim too low. She criticises our "plausible and pleasant ways of picturing, eliciting, demonstrating, illustrating, summarizing, in fact doing all those things for children, which they are born with the potency to do for themselves"; and she tells us that if we will have courage, "we shall be surprised . . . at the amount of intellectual strong meat almost any child will take at a meal and digest at his leisure", adding that "teaching and tale, however lucid or fascinating, effect nothing until self-activity be set up, that is, *self-education* is the only possible education; the rest is the mere veneer laid on the surface of a child's nature."

Gloucestershire Schools have been working under Miss Mason's scheme since May, 1917. Even in three months the effect was already manifest. The gain in interest and intelligence was great: the imagination had been stirred: the vocabulary had been enriched in a very striking way; and the power of expression had developed to an extent that can best be realised

P.T.O.



if I say that a child is now writing three or four rapid vigorous pages stamped with its individuality, where six months before it would scarce have written one, and that one without trace of facility, vigour, or self-expression.

It is impossible not to form the very highest hopes of the ultimate fruit of the scheme, when it shall have been at work for four or five years, and children are coming up to the top of the School who were entered to it at the bottom.

A Schoolmistress writes, —

*Examination Weeks.*—We took the Examination Tests as far as we had gone in the work. All the girls turned up in fine form and we scarcely had an absentee that week. I have known of girls attending well before a School Treat or a Concert came off—but of girls attending a whole week for an examination—I had never heard—or thought possible. However it is quite true.

The tests were worked and the girls did as well as they possibly could. I never realised that there was so much in the girls, and the papers show that what was really in came out. I was quite surprised at the results, though many a girl went through a heart searching performance to answer the questions. It did them a world of good; they found out that if they had been inattentive or absent, it was no good—they simply could not work the papers and so lost marks and their position in class. It was quite a study to the elder girls. It was a hard week, but the girls really liked the examination.

Of all the work this term we found the History—from Arnold Forster's History of England—the most difficult. This scheme requires in the teachers an absolute enthusiasm for the work, and they must have in some form or other a love of books.

I should now like to summarise what appear to me the chief advantages of the scheme. First—from the teacher's view.

The work is so interesting that teachers, young and old, love to be in school amongst their work. The young teacher learns and gains knowledge as she teaches, and it is a heaven-sent boon to a teacher who has been many years teaching "Drudgery," and one has all felt the latter at times.

No single lesson is monotonous. Something fresh in every lesson.

Children are more at ease with their teacher, and are not afraid to speak out. It brings out all the individuality in the child and the teacher.

The teachers say that they would not like to go back to the old scheme for all the world; they are heart and soul in love with the new work.

From the child's point of view:—

Children learn to study by themselves.

They hear and read the very best carefully chosen books, and children who read from the very best books must express their thoughts in good English.

They are kept interested, and their enthusiasm in school is unbounded.

Their lives are full of joy, the joy of learning (and the little ones love to learn), the joy of coming to school, the joy of real living.

They enter school with love and leave it with regret on going to work—not like the boy who watched the clock all one morning, and when the teacher asked him if he had to go on an important errand, said, "No, Sir," but when 12 o'clock struck he jumped up and said with a glad ring in his voice, "I'm off, I am fourteen years of age to-day," and rushed out of the school. What a tragedy lay in those few words!

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For

Another Schoolmistress adds,

Most briefly speaking, it may be summed up in the words that the actual attention rather than memory is brought into play. Now this is done through the medium of narration and composition. A passage or passages from some good book, a whole story, even, is read to the children, and they either narrate what they have heard on the conclusion of the reading, or write a composition on it. This is a very different thing from learning by heart. Whereas memorizing can become a purely mechanical repetition of words till they have been imprinted on the brain, and involving no actual understanding of the meaning thereof, narration, or the writing out of a subject, which has been but once read to the children, must call for close attention on their part.

Speaking of our customary method of education at an educational meeting, Dr. Napier used the following words:—

"In spite of the improvements in teaching, apparatus and text-books, the boys who left school to-day were little superior to those of thirty or forty years ago. Too much attention was given to teaching: too little to making the children learn: and the sloppiness of natural opinion was greatly encouraged by the lack of intellectual discipline and training. If children were taught to learn, to think and to suffer in order to get knowledge, then when they grew up they would appreciate the value of forming opinions and the solemn necessity of having no opinions till they knew the facts."

But to return to the scheme we are now considering. It might be suggested at the outset that this narrating or writing of a subject after one reading is too difficult for children. It has now been proved by those who have tried the method that it is not so. Also the fact must always be borne in mind that a little difficulty stimulates, and we ought no more to hesitate in giving intellectual food to children after they have passed the first stages of babyhood, than we would hesitate to give meat to a growing child.

Many books must be used and a great deal of reading done, and as there is so much to read time only allows it to be read once. ~~Let me give a list of at least some of the books which would be required:—~~

- Our Island Story.
- Life and Her Children.
- The Fairy Land of Science.
- The History of English Literature.
- Tales of Troy and Greece.
- History of France.
- Study of Plant Life.
- The Ambleside Geography Readers Books I., II., III., IV.
- ~~Arnold Forster's History Book.~~

Beside the permanent books

Different Classical Plays and Poems every three months, also some good standard novel and various other books. Reproductions of six pictures by some famous artists are used each term, these only cost 1/9 the set and are of the greatest educational value.

Reading Miss Mason's scheme in conjunction with a mental review of one's own childhood, one realizes almost instinctively its practical worth. One knows so well the lasting impression, or memory rather, of any story which one has either heard/read, and repeated to some younger brother or sister, a totally different memory from that obtained by mere learning by heart from the written page, which, as already said, can often be nothing but a parrot-like repetition, with no real understanding of the matter in hand.



Of course, by Miss Mason's method, word for word repetition is frequently obtained, but it is not mechanical learning; it is a gradual training of the mind to a quick understanding, and, THROUGH the understanding, to a memorizing of the subject.

Those who have ever themselves attempted to memorize a sermon or lecture in order to repeat it to some friend, will easily understand and appreciate the method Miss Mason suggests. They will know how, from at first being able to repeat nothing but the salient facts, gradually the memory will learn to assimilate not only the salient facts but also the details, and even the very words in which they were embodied. The sermon or lecture is, in fact, re-constructed in the mind, at first merely in part, eventually as a complete whole. Ordinary listening would never have obtained this result. It was obtained through the stimulus of the prospective narration.

Now, it is very certain that if children are taught to concentrate, or to have their attention attractively caught, their actual powers of memory are, as a whole, considerably greater than those of an older person. . . .

We have found it to be a scheme which educates in the best sense of the word. By it the child is encouraged to work out his own line of thought, instead of following—or not following—one particular line worked out by the teacher in order to arrive at a certain fact or idea. The child does more work, while the teacher does less; and surely this is of the very essence of education, the end towards which education should be directed. The scheme gives scope for originality, and therefore each child's nature becomes, in a measure, the natural result of its own originality. Hitherto there has been little real chance of calling forth the latent individuality of the children. It was impossible that it should be so, when set portions of work, whatever practical use they might be in themselves, were merely perfectly learned and memorized. It was almost impossible to judge how much the child had really understood, how much the child HAD MADE ITS OWN, how much it had actually stored up in the treasure house of the brain.

There is no question but that, when children have been taught really to appreciate good literature, they still retain their taste for it on leaving school.

Good literature and good language are practically synonymous terms. Through the reading, and, above all, the narrating of good literature, the children's vocabulary is greatly enlarged. Naturally a number of the words are entirely new and unfamiliar to them, but then so were all words unfamiliar in their infancy; it simply means adding to the store they already possess, and it is surprising how soon they begin to use these new and complex words, at first only when narrating, but later in their compositions, and even in their own conversations.

The powers of reasoning are greatly developed by this method. The mind, having plenty to feed upon, grows in intellect and activity. Questions are looked at from many points of view, and a clearer and broader outlook on life is the result. . . .

The scheme places the best, and the best only, before the children, whose thoughts and ideas, being turned always towards the light, grow in intelligence as naturally as a plant grows towards the sun. They become more intellectual, and the whole tone of the school is gradually raised. We have noticed this fact particularly among our children after six months' training.

Recently one of the clergy made especial comment on the reasoning and intellectual powers of the elder girls. Having given them a lesson on the Sermon on the Mount, dealing with its deeper aspects, he was exceedingly surprised and pleased to find how thoroughly the girls had grasped his



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instruction and reasoned out the underlying and deeper meaning. He felt fully convinced that this development of their reasoning powers was the result of the new method of training which we had been adopting during the last six months.

In every case we find the interest of the children aroused, and they are invariably on the alert. This is particularly noticeable in the youngest children, those of six, seven and eight years of age. . . .

Other books which they thoroughly enjoy are, The Age of Fable by Thomas Bullfinch, and Stories from Troy and Greece by Andrew Lang; but perhaps the favourite of all is "Bleak House." Possibly this is on account of the evident pleasure in comparing and contrasting the different persons in the novel. They are undoubtedly quick in discovering the characteristics of each, in recognizing and being attracted by what is noble and good, and in promptly denouncing all meanness and hypocrisy.

Of course this is exactly what we teachers want. If our girls will only be drawn to make heroes and heroines of the right kind of fiction people, they will naturally be led to a desire to imitate them, and they will, as naturally, learn to despise the meaner characters. They will, in fact, half unconsciously make friends of the best fiction people,—not forgetting also those who have lived in fact,—and these mind-friendships will imperceptibly lead them on towards the goal of true womanhood.

ATTENDANCE.—The attendance has undoubtedly improved, for although quite good before it is much better in this way, the elder girls very seldom stay away at odd times to help in different ways; they are evidently keen to be at school and "where there is a will there is a way."

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# REPORT ON THE P.N.E.U. EXPERIMENT IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

BY H. W. HOUSEHOLD.

(Secretary for Education, Gloucestershire.)

It was in November, 1916, that Miss Mason's method and its achievements first became known to us. By the following March five Schools in the County had embarked upon the course. One of these failed, but the others (Group 1. below) were so successful, and so enthusiastic, that early in 1918 a number of other Schools (Group 2.) were invited to share the privilege, and later in the Spring yet others (Group 3.) By this time twenty-six Schools, four of which were Infants' Schools, were working under the Scheme. These Schools are indicated below by letters of the alphabet. The nature of the organisation, the number of children and teachers, and character of the district in which the School is situated, are shown in each case:—

GROUP I.			Numbers.	Staff.	Character of Neighbourhood.
	School.				
A.	C. of E.	G. & I.	112	4	Partly rural, partly industrial
B.	C. of E.	G.	115	4	Cotswold Town.
C.	C.	G.	85	3	Partly rural, partly industrial.
D.	C.	G.	123	3	Urban (Industrial).
GROUP II.			Numbers.	Staff.	Character of Neighbourhood.
	School.				
E.	C. of E.	M. & I.	125	4	Rural.
F.	C. of E.	M. & I.	280	9	Partly rural, partly industrial.
G.	C.	M.	177	5	Partly rural, partly industrial.
H.	C. of E.	B.	132	4	Cotswold Town.
I.	C.	B.	295	8	Cotswold Town.
K.	C. of E.	M.	178	5	Mining.
L.	C. of E.	I.	107	4	Mining.
M.	C.	G.	264	7	Urban (Industrial).
N.	C.	B.	268	7	Urban (Industrial).
O.	C. of E.	M. & I.	48	2	Rural.
P.	C.	B.	165	7	Urban (Industrial).
Q.	C.	M. & I.	241	10	Urban (Industrial).
R.	C.	M.	117	3	Rural.
S.	C.	I.	50	2	Rural.
GROUP III.			Numbers.	Staff.	Character of Neighbourhood.
	School.				
T.	C.	B.	180	5	Mining.
U.	C.	G.	164	5	Mining.
V.	C.	I.	167	5	Mining.
W.	C.	M.	472	10	Mining.
X.	C.	M.	165	8	Mining. (Higher Elementary).
Y.	C.	M.	170	5	Mining.
Z.	C.	I.	122	4	Mining.
AA.	C.	G.	155	6	Urban (Industrial).

- C. ... Council.
- C. of E. ... Church of England.
- B. ... Boys'.
- G. ... Girls'.
- I. ... Infants'.
- M. ... Mixed.

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By 1918 <sup>2</sup> ~~twelve~~ six Schools were  
working under the Scheme

To each of these Schools the following circular letter was  
recently addressed ~~and the following circular letter was~~

County Education Office,  
Shire Hall, Gloucester.

4th January, 1919.

Dear Sir (or Madam),

Now that Miss Mason's Scheme has been working for some time in more than a score of Schools, I am anxious to be able to tell the Education Committee what measure of success is attending it. Owing to the War conditions I have not been able to visit the Schools as I should have liked to do, but even if I had visited them I should not have felt able—nor should I have been the proper person—to estimate the results of the Scheme.

You and your staff, and perhaps some of your children, can do it with much surer touch; and I should be very grateful if each School would let me have reports and memoranda from any of those who are teaching or are being taught, who feel that they have anything that they would like to say, no matter how trifling it may seem. I shall make it my business to digest the heap of material which I hope will flow in upon me, and in return I may be able to give back something to the Schools.

Needless to say, I want to know just what you are all really thinking. If you do not accept Miss Mason's aims, or like her methods, or approve her choice of books, I should like to know it. If you are in complete sympathy then I should like to have illustrations of the results that are being attained.

In the December number of the "Parents' Review" there is a most suggestive article on Education and Kultur by E.K.—initials behind which is no doubt concealed the name of Miss Kitching, Miss Mason's friend and Secretary—which will point lines of thought and help to weigh up achievement.

I hope that nobody will make a burden of what I ask. Much or little, I shall be grateful for what you send. It may be that in some cases the moment has not come for saying anything. It will come later. Where it has come there will be things to say, and those are the things that I should like to hear.

In any report that I may frame on your material it would probably be the general wish that individual Schools should remain anonymous.

I am, Yours truly,

(Signed) H. W. HOUSEHOLD,

Secretary.

The admirable reports which have been sent in are too long to be printed in full. In summarising their contents it has seemed best to take in sequence the various points brought out by the many writers, and to illustrate the argument by extracts. The extracts have sometimes been shortened by the omission (always indicated) of a few words or sentences, but nothing material has been left out in any passage quoted. The compiler has studied to present every point of view and line of argument with fairness.



Perhaps it was rather early to ask for such reports. The Schools had been working under almost every possible disadvantage. Many were understaffed; the influenza epidemic had played havoc with the attendance and the work; books came late from the publishers, and in many cases did not come at all. There was much to discourage, and little to hearten, save the cheering light which at times shone through the clouds of difficulty from the far horizon, where a new sun was rising with promise of a cloudless noon. Eleven of the Schools have marked its rising, and await with a sure confidence the vision of its meridian glory. The teachers of three, "lost leaders" of whom better things were hoped, have fallen by the way, stumbling on rocks of their own imagining, and have sought leave to go back again to the old familiar darkness. They have gone. They could not see the light, and said stoutly it was not there. Three have not felt able to send in any report but their success can hardly be doubted. Of the rest most have beheld elusive gleams, and press forward bravely and hopefully, though not without mistakes and trials and disappointments.

The difficulties encountered are real. That they are often a result of misunderstanding, and so self-created, rather adds to than diminishes their power to obstruct. Let us look at them through the eyes of those who have found them, sometimes very dragons, in their path.

Some—among them one of the fallen—feared the terminal examinations. They remembered the annual nightmare of their early teaching days, and said that examinations must lead to cramming. They would not believe that these examinations do not; that revision is not attempted; that the fulness of the syllabus makes it, and is intended to make it, quite impossible; that (greatest of all joys) it is found to be unnecessary. "The old idea of constant revision is rendered impossible," says the Head Master of N., "If I interpret Miss Mason correctly (and he does) she discountenances this repetition as unnecessary and harmful, and certainly I have long since discovered that time spent in going over, again and again, work already done is generally wearisome and unprofitable."

Some lack confidence in the children whom they teach. "The Scheme," they say "was never intended for the child in the Elementary School. It was intended for children working at home."

Or, as another, an assistant, writes, "The Scheme would be

a most excellent one if used in Secondary Schools, or in Institutions, where the aim is to turn out **students**, thoroughly well-learned in the things of ancient days. . . . Practically all our pupils have to become **workers** at an early age. . . . It is folly to waste the short and precious school-days in so much book learning, when the child's chief need is a practical knowledge of how to meet the difficulties of everyday life. Students are seldom practical people, and the British Empire of the future needs workers rather than bookworms."

"Alas! alas! that any teacher should so write. Must not the workers be thinkers too? Must they not learn the great lessons of the ages—the experience of the past with its successes and its failures, the wisdom of the wise and the folly of the foolish—if they are to steer the ship of state by safe ways to the harbour of well-being and contentment, and not end disastrously upon the rocks?"

"The British Museum and Plutarch's Lives," says another, "are difficult for younger children. The scenes and lives of people that approach more nearly to their own time would seem to be of a more practical value. . . . The average person knows nothing of these people and can be expected to care little about unearthing the dim and distant past."

The same note occurs in other reports. Sometimes it sounds more harshly still. "It is utterly immaterial to me," says one, "what the Babylonians wore, or what the Assyrians built. . . . History should deal chiefly with the past century." Shall we not think with pity of what those who write thus have themselves missed somewhere in the days of their youth? Imagination—the gracious influence that does all the gilding of our life, and is also the very source of the great conceptions that lead to material success and social well-being—imagination in them has atrophied and come to nought.

"The study of Plutarch's Lives," says another, "seems suitable only for riper minds. If the Lives as a whole were studied the scholars might get an idea of the foundation of the Roman and Grecian Empires." But he has missed the whole purpose of the study, which is by no means to give them "an idea of the foundation of the Roman and Grecian Empires," but something very different. Old Montaigne\* shall tell him what it is.

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\* "Of the institution and education of children." *Essays*, Book I., Chap. xxv.



"He (the teacher) shall by the help of Histories inform himself of the worthiest minds that were in the best ages. It is a frivolous study if a man list, but of invaluable worth to such as can make use of it. . . . What profit shall he not reap touching this point, reading the lives of our Plutarch? Always conditioned the master bethink himself whereto his charge tendeth, and that he imprint not so much in his scholar's mind the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio, nor so much where Marcellus died, as because he was unworthy of his devoir he died there; that he teach him not so much to know Histories, as to judge of them. . . . To some kind of men it is a mere grammatical study, but to others a perfect anatomy of Philosophy, by means whereof the secretest part of our nature is searched into."

It is all plain enough to those whose eyes are open. Let us hear another teacher, the Head Master of Q. There is no disguising that the children find Plutarch difficult, but they are meant to find him difficult. The joy comes when the difficulties are mastered, and they are being mastered at Q.

"Among the subjects new to teachers and scholars," we are told, "the study of 'Citizenship' through Plutarch's Lives seems to have presented difficulty. In some instances this is due to the difficult sentences of the translation. . . . This difficulty has been overcome to a certain extent by greater acquaintance with the style of the writing; but more so, however, by a recognition of two things. First, that to explain the meaning of the words destroys interest in the story and annoys the child. Second, that in many instances it is unnecessary. Although a child's dictionary knowledge of the meaning of words is lacking, it does not follow that the meaning of a sentence or paragraph is unknown to him. . . . Neither is the correct employment of the words beyond him in writing or narrating."

~~Two examples of this power to 'sense' the meaning were observed last term. There is a particular boy in Form 11B. who has not hitherto been looked upon as possessing high intelligence. Classified by age he ought to be two forms higher. Last term in taking the story of Romulus and Remus I found that in power of narrating and degree of understanding (that is of 'sensing' a paragraph and either translating into his vocabulary, which was apt, or in using the words read to him) he stood above the others, and also above the majority in the next~~

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higher form. In passing, I may say that his interest in other subjects seems to have increased and his condition is improved.

"The further example of this power to grasp the meaning of a writer without being able to define the words in detail, was afforded by 'The Talisman.' In two forms the teachers set out with the purpose of taking it chapter by chapter, dwelling on the explanation of the meaning of words. The result was disappointing. Mechanical progress was slow and laboured. Interest in the story was killed. Written tests showed little grasp of the story, and in spite of such careful digging in the sentences the gold remained hidden. I suggested letting the children read silently—testing by narration—and then written tests; and then only in those parts where the incident and description were likely to appeal. Only such explanation was given as was asked for by the children, or which was likely to bring into greater clearness some necessary point. The results were much better. The children imagined the characters and pictured the incidents for themselves. The Third Crusade, its incidents and actors, became something more than a chapter in Arnold Forster's History. Written tests showed that the author had been followed, and in reproducing his story the children reproduced his words."

"The children very much appreciated the story of Romulus and Remus," says an uncertificated assistant in the same School, "and seem to have set out with the determination to enjoy the life story of Lysurgus. It is this book—'Plutarch's Lives'—and the History of Rome which are the subjects of interesting compositions." For this young teacher (she is only 21) has found that "Narration has greatly improved their English. The children have a larger vocabulary. They have a clearer way of expressing themselves, and are not afraid of speaking in front of the other scholars. . . . Then again there are so many subjects for Composition and the Compositions have certainly improved; they are not as scrappy as they used to be. The subjects of their essays are more interesting."

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\* NOTE.—The Head Master of N. remarks that "the benefits on the whole are undeniable, and in some individual instances quite surprising. We have found that some boys, who formerly were inattentive and forgetful, have become interested, industrious and intelligent in their outlook. I would give first place to the increased interest taken by the classes in their lessons. To secure this and its consequent attention is an achievement, and the best proof of the mental training afforded."



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"It is wonderful," says the Head Mistress of C., "how the expression in written work has improved, and what quantities will be written . . . and what an amount of information is gathered and remembered, and long remembered too."

There is the answer to that examination bogey. Let the teachers and the children lay it. There is no need of other words than theirs.

An Assistant who teaches the eight-year-olds in M. writes, "Miss Mason's Scheme is at present one of great surprises. We did not take any examination at the end of the Summer Term, and many sighs were uttered and great dread felt when we heard we were taking the Christmas Examination. The feelings of utter helplessness and chaos grew worse as the dreaded Monday morning came. There was no relief when the questions came, many of which were on the first lessons of the term. The teacher stood before the class and gave out the first examination, a history question on the very first story told in the last week of August.

"For a moment or two there was a blank. Then one by one the children pulled themselves together, and gathered up from the backs of their memories with most wonderful results. Hardly a tiny detail was missing by the time they had finished. After the first plunge the teacher breathed, and each examination was waited for with greater and greater serenity."

d The teacher of the seven-year-olds in the same school says:—"Several times during the term I felt very doubtful of the success of the Scheme, as often the work seemed far beyond the capacity of the children, but the examination proved that my doubts were groundless. They attacked the examination well, and one of the most striking results was the way the children corrected their own English when they knew I was writing down their exact answers."

"We did not think that they could do it" is the note of many reports.

The children themselves like the examinations. "In spite of all the drawbacks of the last term the children would have been keenly disappointed if the examination had not been held," writes the Head Master of G. In some schools it was noted that the attendance was exceptionally good during the examination week. Nobody would willingly miss the papers.

Marking examination papers in large numbers is a trying task, but "marking the papers written by the scholars this term was exceedingly interesting work," says an Assistant in

W., whose class must number nearly fifty children. But let us go back to the doubtful ones again. Their hesitations and objections are really very useful and may enable us to help them. Their identity is hidden and the pen, like the Surgeon's knife, may have a kindly purpose, when by probing it brings harmful growths to light.

"I think that a far better selection of reading books might be made," says one of those who have abandoned the scheme; "Children of 12 and 13 do not enjoy Scott or Shakespeare. They find them too difficult." Let us see what others have to say of Scott and Shakespeare.

~~"What has surprised us most," says the Head Master of N. "is the ready way boys absorb information and become interested in literature, which we have hitherto considered outside the scope of primary school-teaching. A year ago I could not have believed boys would read Lytton's 'Harold,' Kingsley's 'Hereward,' and Scott's 'Talisman,' with a real pleasure and zest, or would study with understanding and delight Shakespeare's 'Macbeth,' 'King John,' and 'Richard II'; but experience has shown we had underrated the abilities and tastes of the lads we should have known better."~~

"The Talisman is very hard-worded, but it is ever so interesting," says a girl of twelve in M.

Shakespeare has proved himself a triumphant and wholly glorious success in many of the Schools. "We were sorry the play of King John did not come in time for us to be able to read it—we simply enjoyed Macbeth," says another girl of twelve in M.

"There always seems joy when Shakespeare is announced," says the Head Mistress of C, and she adds that "many girls have bought a complete copy of Shakespeare's Works."

The writer has himself seen and felt the joy of the children in acting some of the great scenes from the plays, scenes which in one case that he recalls (it was at D.) they had not touched for more than three months. By their own desire they had harked back to the work of the previous term. Of course to get this spirit and this success needs good teaching. "In beginning this Scheme in a School," writes the Head Mistress of A., "the teacher must live in her class. She must pass in and out among the girls while they are reading and see that nothing is passed over that is not understood; read the context with the child, take the hard word out, and the child will herself find out the meaning of it by seeing its use in the sentence. I find



now that there is no need to go to the girls, they come out to me." Elsewhere she says, "I find Miss Mason's scheme just what we needed. The variety of subjects, which are so cleverly arranged that they blend into one whole, charms the children. They love to read and they love to be read to. . . . I find too that the children are beginning to appreciate language. I was reading to them one day one of the old Norse legends; the whole class of over thirty girls was wrapped in attention, when one of them remarked in a pause in the reading, 'Isn't that like poetry?' "

An Uncertificated Assistant in G. who takes Form ~~AX~~ **IA** says "The work is undoubtedly extremely interesting both for teacher and for scholar. It adds an entirely new outlook to the average child in the Elementary School. . . . It makes even small children realise that there are thousands of good books which they had never heard of, and it makes them wish that they *could* read them. . . .

"The improvement in the children's vocabulary is already marked, and quite little children are slowly acquiring the habit of distinguishing between synonyms because they are so constantly hearing the correct words applied in the different meanings. They also use these words for themselves when writing down their stories and lessons. They are beginning to appreciate beauty of prose and verse. The memory is strengthened considerably."

The Head Master of the same School refers to the influence of the Scheme upon the tone of the School (which is always high). "During the nine months Miss Mason's Scheme has been worked," he says "there is an added delightful stimulus, which I had hardly thought possible among children who already loved their work."

Perhaps then we may dismiss the objection of one of the faint-hearted that "the books are written in a language far above that which the vocabulary of the children will allow them to read with moderate comfort," remarking only that the aim must always be ahead of the achievement, and that the ability of the children to enjoy and profit by the books is far greater than he thinks. The Assistant Mistress, who teaches Form ~~AB~~ **IB**, in M., puts the first point quite plainly. "The choice of books for Standard I. is good," she says, "they are sufficiently beyond

the children to be of real educational value." And where some of the books are felt to be difficult (perhaps too difficult) it is recognised that "when the lower forms have had more practice in the working of the Scheme, no doubt our older forms will be able to grasp these. We cannot expect our girls to grasp the Scheme in its entirety at once." It should be added that the Head Mistress of C., who writes thus, is delighted with the results that have been achieved.

Some teachers do not understand the value of the delightful books on Natural History, and think that they either supplant the natural study of Nature or leave no time for it. The children know better. Child after child writes to say how much they have enjoyed reading about the stars. ~~"As we are walking sometimes and the stars are shining,"~~ says a girl of eleven in A., ~~"I tell Mother about the stars and planets and comets. She said she should think astronomy very interesting."~~ That shows what the books are doing. The unbeliever who writes, "More would surely be gained by watching the development of frog spawn to tadpole and frog, than from reading so many pages from a book on the subject at a season when the spawn cannot be obtained," may really take heart. The child will look for the frog spawn, if that has caught his interest, when the time comes round—mercifully not as a member of a class under direction, but as a happy, curious, little soul following up by himself many a quest inspired by the delightful pages. We do not, need not, cannot read about everything just (and only just) at the moment when it reveals itself. The appeal made to the children by the study of "Plant Life," "The Fairyland of Science," "Life and Her Children," "The Sciences," and other books, the interest which they excite and the activity of mind which they set up, are noticed by several teachers.

A valuable appreciation of the method and its results was received from the Head Master of Q., who has already been quoted at some length at pp. 365 and 366 above. The following passages are interesting and suggestive.

"The subjects seem to be many; yet nearly one half, comprising considerably more than half the bulk of work set in the programmes, is but one subject—Reading.

"Every educated person is indebted for the best part of his powers to Reading. From the very outset of his educational



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adventures a child is being trained in the use of this power to read for pleasure and information. Incidentally the attitude of us teachers towards the subject is corrected. The technique of reading had the chief place; and while the reading lesson offered the opportunity to secure clearness of speech, yet that achievement is of less value to the individual than his power to read with purpose. In spite of the appearance on our time-tables of so many reading lessons, whatever fluency and accuracy of vocal interpretation we secured was not accompanied by the more important mental interpretation. . . . Under the scheme Reading throughout has improved, as it is bound to do. And the child in narrating gives better modulation of voice than was ever before secured when it was sought for as a thing apart. . . .

"It is clear that the intellectual interest of the child is aroused, and that teacher and pupil alike have greater pleasure in their common task. It is a common task. Both are engaged in a study of the same subject from the same books. The teacher is no longer to be regarded as the fountain of all knowledge. . . . The spirit of self-help is engendered. The habit of doing for oneself is required from the beginning; and it is evident that if a child is educated on these lines from the age of seven to fourteen it will have the habit of mind which will enable it to achieve rich results in the informative period of its development from fourteen years onward.

∞ This power of self-preparation is already noticeable, and, naturally, in a greater degree in Form IV. And when Continuation Schools are established, such children, trained in this way, should be able to pass into these schools and derive the greatest possible amount of benefit from their continued training.

"A further hope! When children have gone from Elementary to Secondary Schools, it has been observed that they have not readily adjusted themselves to new conditions. This is due, no doubt, in great part to the fact that they are unable to study when left to themselves. The habit of relying on the teacher is strong with them, and when required to delve for themselves they are unable to do so. Although provided with the tools of the student, they know not how to use them. The hope is that this reproach on elementary training will be removed.

"Among those results which are clearly due to P.U.S.

methods is the increased power of concentration; and I think Miss Mason's claim that narration secures concentration may be conceded. Written tests show this. When a lesson was tested by what the books on 'School Methods' called 'rapid, vigorous questioning,' the written tests, even when immediately following, were disappointing. Narration shows the grasp a child has of its reading, and at the same time strengthens its grasp. Its confidence in its possession is confirmed, so that it is not afraid to write or speak afterwards for fear of being wrong. It knows how much it has at its command.

"There appear to me to be two errors into which we may fall in connection with narration. The first lies in the preparation. This preparation is done either by the teacher reading the selected part, or by the child reading it—aloud or silently. Assuming the teacher's reading to be good, that method seems to give better results. Modulation, emphasis, gesture, even attitude of body, help in interpretation. The child's mind can concentrate on what is read. The mechanical difficulty of reading is removed, and there is no break in the flow of thought. But the object is to train in the habit of purposeful reading. To do that with hope of success, there should be an increasing amount of silent preparation, not only as the scholar progresses from form to form, but also from term to term in its forms.

"The second danger springs from the fear in the teacher's mind that the prescribed amount of work will not be done each term. This fear tempts one to overdo the personal method of reading, and to rely too much on the best children. Those with weaker powers of understanding do not receive chances (of narrating) in sufficient number either to develop greater powers or to give them confidence and encouragement. More than that, if not continually called upon to take a share, equivalent to their powers, in narrating, the lazy habit of mind, springing from and fostered by reliance in other minds, will grow with them.

"Composition, oral and written, is undoubtedly improved. Narration secures better oral composition, and the improvement in the written work follows. . . . The children write at greater length, and acquaintance with good models is seen in the fuller language and better construction. . . . Finally, the interest in reading is greater. Children borrow the books

insert.

work